

*Some of the Abuses Complained of at Billingsgate, Bear-
Key, and other Publick Markets within the City of
LONDON, Humbly Offer'd to the Consideration of the
Honourable House of Commons for Redress.*

No. 2122.

THAT Two or Three particular Persons take upon them to Forestal and Ingross most of the Fish as it is brought to *Billingsgate* Market, which they sell again in the same Market to Retailers, who many of them likewise sell the same again in the said Market; which Practice tends greatly to Inhance the Price thereof, and is against the Laws of this Kingdom: And though the City Officers have a Duty paid them as Clerks of this Market, and whose Office and Duty it is to Prevent or Prosecute these Enormities, yet they cannot be prevailed with so to do, but by their Corrupt Connivance thereat give Encouragement thereunto.

THE afore said Officers have likewise a Rate or Toll upon Corn and Grain brought to be sold in the Port of *LONDON*, for crying thereof, to the end that publick Knowledge might be had of the Quantity and Quality of the same, which, if practiced, would be of great Advantage to all the KING's Subjects inhabiting in and about this City, who have any occasion to buy Corn or Grain; but the said Officers wholly neglect to do the said Duty, and yet take the Money only due upon Account thereof; and Forestalling, Regrating, and Ingrossing of Corn and Grain brought to and sold in the said Port, is daily practiced with Impunity, notwithstanding the said Officers are Yeomen of the Water-side, and Clerks of the Markets of *Billingsgate* and *Bear-Key*.

IT is Humbly Prayed Care may be taken to Redress these Abuses (in the Act depending) for *Billingsgate* Market as to fix certain Hours for the beginning of each Market, the better to prevent Forestalling, Regrating, and other Irregularities, and that those Persons who bring Fish, Corn and Grain to the Markets of *Billingsgate* and *Bear-Key*, may be only permitted to sell the same in the said Markets; and that the Quality and Quantity of Corn brought into the River of *Thames*, may be set up at *Bear-Key* every Market Day, pursuant to an Order lately made by the Court of Aldermen for that purpose.

AND whereas pursuant to an Act of Parliament made the 22d. of *Charles* the Second, Ground was set out and purchased by the City of *London*, with Money given and appropriated by the said Act for that purpose, for other Common and Publick Market Places, and Market Houses were erected upon Pillars in the said Ground (so set out and purchased as aforesaid) and left open for the Shelter of Country Market People bringing Food and Victuals to the said City to Sell four Market Days in the Week.

BUT contrary to the Design and Intent of the said Act, and the Nature and Constitution of all Publick Markets, the Farmers of the said Markets have filled the said Market Houses with inclosed Shops, and built several other Inclosures with Locks and Keys in the said Markets, which they Lett out for a Yearly Rent, some for Ale-Houses, Warehouses, Brandy Shops, Poulterers, Fishmongers, Chandlers, most of whom are Hucksters, Forestallers and Regraters, who keep them every Day in the Week, contrary to the Laws and Constitutions of the said Markets, to the great Discouragement and Hindrance of the Country People bringing Food and Victuals there to sell, who are either kept out and forced to sell their Victuals in the Common Streets, to the great Obstruction thereof, or else thrust by the Farmers under the Pent-Houses of the Neighbouring Houses, to the very great Nuisance of the Inhabitants thereof, and great Oppression of the Market People, who are generally forced to pay both the Farmer and the House-keeper a certain Rent, which hath ruined many of them, and caused others to leave the said Markets, to the Inhancing the Prices of Food and Victuals: And Meal is wholly excluded the said Markets for want of Room and Shelter therein, by reason of the Erections and Inclosures aforesaid, to the very great Damage of all the KING's Subjects inhabiting in and about the City of *London*, frequenting the said Markets to buy Provisions there.

IT is therefore likewise Humbly Prayed, That effectual Provision may be made in the intended Act aforesaid, to lay open all inclosed Ale-Houses, Shops and Warehouses erected in the Markets aforesaid (which were intended to be open) for the Common Use of Market People, bringing Food and Victuals there to sell upon the Market Days appointed for that purpose; and that the Days and Hours may be duly observed, for the better Incouragement of the Country Market People, and preventing Forestalling, Regrating, Ingrossing, &c. which Practices have and do greatly Inhance the Price of Victuals in the said City, &c. to the unspeakable Damage of the Inhabitants in and about the same, especially the Poor Handicrafts and Labouring Men, and their Families.

Note, The City hath been so Cautious in their Lease of the Publick Markets to the said Farmers, that they have lett them the Market Ground only so far as they had power to do with such Sheds, Booths, &c. as were used for Markets by the Market-People the 2d. of November, 1686, or Four Years before, at which time none of the Nuisances complained of were erected. And therefore the Removing them can no way affect the City, in respect to their said Lease.